

JOHN NEAL'S

BOATS TO CONSIDER FOR OCEAN CRUISING

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Through Offshore Cruising Seminars and Boat Purchase Consultations I've helped more than 12,000 sailors locate the best cruising boats for their voyages and budget. If you need knowledgeable, experienced (410,000 ocean miles, 52 years) and unbiased advice from someone who has no financial interest in the boat you select, I can help with a flat-fee, unlimited time Boat Purchase Consultation. Details on www.mahina.com/consult.html or contact me at Mahina Offshore Services, sailing@mahina.com, tel 360.378.7344. v4.26

Boat Model Overall Value, 1 – 5, 5 being best value and highest quality.

Able 32, 42, 48	3	Superb quality, expensive, but old. Chuck Paine designs.
Alajuela 33, 38	1	33 is a good design, 38 is a classic dinosaur with long bowsprit and boomkin.
Alberg 30,35, 37	1	Proven, but ancient, narrow, short waterlines, limited interior volume.
Alden 38, 43, 44, 46, 48, 54, 58	3	Classy, well built, beautiful. Because of age, teak decks may be an issue.
Allied 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 42	1	Functional, practical but truly ancient and likely not cost effective to refit.
Alubat (Ovni, Cigale) 36-58 (all models)	5	Builders of simple and innovative lifting-keel aluminum cruising boats
Allures 40, 45, 51 (all models)	5	Top quality, innovative, aluminum hulls/lifting keel design with fiberglass decks and house on newer models (a brilliant construction technique).
Amel 36-64	4	Strong, well designed passage makers, great value, but systems-rich and AC generator-dependent. Overall, a very solid choice.
Amazon 29, 37, 44	3	Steel boats, attractive modern designs, some corrosion issues.
Amphitrite 43	3	Wauquiez built, strong & roomy with good storage. Odd deck design, but solid boat and good value. Avoid teak deck models as teak is super thin.
Beneteau 40CC, 42CC, 44CC, 423, 461, 473, 47.7, 50, 523		423, 473 and CC series are solid values, as long as one doesn't run aground. Beneteau's don't tend to have the steering systems problems as Jeanneau.
Bestevaer 36-70 (all models)	5	Highest quality Dutch aluminum cruising boats.
Bianca 36-52	3	Quality Danish yard, now a winter refit and storage facility.
Boreal 44, 47, 50, 53, 63	4	Innovative design suitable for high latitudes, consistent late delivery problems.
Bowman 36-58	2	Strong boats, good passage makers, but shortish waterlines and now old.
Brewer 42, 44	2	Improved version of Whitby 42. Old.
Bristol 27-45	3	Good boats. Later models were better quality. Long since out of production.
Bristol Channel Cutter 28	2	Solidly-built, but cockpit and cabin are not comfortable.
Bruckmann 42, 480, 50, 65	3	Solid, roomy Mark Ellis designs, perfect for inclement weather.
Caliber 28, 33, 35, 38, 40.	3	Fairly well-built. Michael McCreary designs. LRC models have substantial tankage but smallish interiors. The 47 is not an attractive boat.
Cambria 40, 44, 46	3	Fast, well-built, gorgeous and have held their value well, but getting old.
Camper Nicholson 31, 32, 35, 38, 39, 40, 43, 47, 56, 58, 70	2	Famous yard, long out of business. Very seaworthy but watch for consistent serious blister problems on all models once in warm waters.
Cabo Rico 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 45, 47	2	Crealock & Paine designs. Some problems with water absorption into balsa-cored decks. Newer Paine-designed models are substantially better.
Cape Dory - all models	1	Classic design, quality, but narrow and small interiors w/short waterlines.
Cape George Cutters 31, 36, 38	2	Many owner-completed, quality varies. Fast, but watch for deck & cabin rot.
Catalina 385, 400 MkII,42 MkII, 425, 445	3	Post 2000 models are good value and quality keeps improving. These are not boats for Cape Horn but are totally adequate for low to mid-latitude cruising.
Cavalier 32, 39	2	Limited production, fairly good quality vessels, but narrow, dated designs.
Centurion 36, 38, 40/41, 42/45 47/49	3	Fast, attractive solid boats with very modest tankage and limited storage. Avoid any with teak decks as removal will cost \$70k+!
Cherubini 44, 48, 62	3	Semi-custom, gorgeous, great sailing & expensive. Limited interior space.
Contessa 26 & 32	1	Tania Aebi & B.J. Caldwell circumnavigated in 26's, but these are TINY boats. The 32 is small and sturdy and truly a classic.
Contest 31, 35, 36, 38, 40, 41, 42, 44, 46, 48, 55, 60	4	Newer models are very attractive & expensive. Yard continues to build highest quality boats and sells refitted boats taken in on trade – great value.
Cooper 416, 508	3	Roomy, fairly well built with inside steering. Good PNW design and reasonable.

Crealock 31, PH 32, 34, 37, 40, 44 by Pacific Seacraft	3	Good value & solidly built but graceful overhangs, canoe sterns, short waterlines mean these boats can hobbyhorse upwind in a chop. Limited tankage.
CS 33, 36	2	Modern, fairly well built. Occasional blister problems.
CSY 37, 44	1	Sturdy, roomy & reasonably priced but very old now.
Dana 24 by Pacific Seacraft	2	Attractive solid, expensive and slooow miniature pocket ocean cruiser.
Deerfoot Yachts	3	Fast & innovative, aluminum & fiberglass hulls designed by Steve Dashew.
Discovery 42, 48, 54, 55, 58, 68	3	Fairly high-quality yard that's been in and out of bankruptcy multiple times.
Dufour 31, 35 - 45	2	1964-84 models had solid hulls & balsa cored-decks. Later models not brilliant.
Elan 43, 434	4	Excellent design and good build quality. Very roomy.
Endurance 35, 38, 40	1	Peter Ibold design, some owner completed. Built by various yards.
Esprit 37 or Valiant 37, 39	3	Comfortable, well proven, good value but some early models may have blisters.
Exploration 45, 52 (Garcia)	5	Innovative, impressive, go-anywhere aluminum lifting keel designs with protected steering positions.
F & C 44	2	Semi-modern Frers designed cruising ketch built in Argentina.
Fantasi 37, 50	5	High quality attractive pilothouse boats built on Orust Island, Sweden.
Farr Pilot House 50, 56, 60, 63	4	Powerful, fast, good quality. Hold value very well.
Fast Passage 39	1	Some built in Canada, some by Tollycraft. WA. Canadian models better.
Fraser 41, 46, 50	2	Sturdy, fairly modern cruisers.
Freya 39	2	Stiff and fast, but many owner-completed, so quality varies greatly.
Garcia 40.9-51.9 (all models)	5	Strong, semi-custom, highest quality aluminum lifting keel designs built in France
Gladiateur 33	1	Sturdy, small interior & cockpit, short on tankage, Wauquiez-built.
Goderich 35, 37, 41	2	Attractive Brewer semi-custom steel boat but small production run and rare.
Gozzard 31, 36, 44	3	Good design & quality construction. Totally committed quality company.
Hallberg-Rassy, 31 - 69 (all models)	5	Stiff, strong, fast, comfortable, good tankage & systems integration. Newer Frers designs faster than earlier models. Incredible support through HR Parts.
Heyman 42	5	Innovative Swedish designed pilothouse built in Estonia.
Hinkley 30-64	3	Very attractive with classic lines, highest quality construction. Modest tankage & storage, shortish waterlines.
Hood 38	3	Hood design, Wauquiez-built, attractive but short on tankage. Solid choice.
Hylas 46, 49, 54, 54 raised Saloon, 56, 70	4	Good performance, tankage & storage. Substantially better quality & fewer deck leaks on newer models.
Island Packet 349, 350, 370, 380, 420, 440, 445, 485, SP Cruiser, 42 MS, Estero	4	Roomy & comfortable, good tankage & storage but some unusual features. Only consider IP's built after 1998 when chainplate issue was addressed.
Jongert 50, 55, 60, 67, 73	3	Quality, heavy, expensive, semi-custom steel and aluminum yachts.
Justine 36	2	Gorgeous Paine design, Morris built cruiser. Rare but graceful.
KM Yachtbuilders (all models)	5	Highest quality semi-custom Dutch-built aluminum lifting keel designs.
Kanter 42, 45, 60, 65	1	Semi-custom steel & alu boats. Later alum. models much better than early steel ones. Chuck Paine & Ted Brewer designs. Some have serious corrosion issues.
LM 30, 315, 32, 380	2	Some have inside steering. Well-built and impressive pocket cruisers.
Little Harbor 42 - 90	2	Hood designed heavy displacement; semi-custom, very high maintenance means these are expensive to own. Strange pinched Ted Hood sterns.
Malo 36, 38, 39, 45, 46	5	High quality offshore boats with good sailing performance. Multiple instances of skeg failure reported on 45 & 46.
Mason 33, 43, 44, 53, 54, 63	1	Traditional designs, short waterlines, deck leaks and high maintenance.
Moody 38, 42, 47, 54, 64	3	Good designs of modest quality but great value. Compare to Catalina.
Morgan 382, 383, 384	3	Ted Brewer design for around \$45-55K. Good value if they've been repowered
Morris 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 42, 44, 45, 454, 46, 48.6, 52	4	Chuck Paine designs, superb quality, this was the highest quality US yard building cruising boats. Semi-custom and expensive.
Mystic 57, 60	3	Dubois design, Bowman built, beautiful. Very limited production run.
Mystery 35, 43	3	Top quality, fast and attractive. Good choice!
Najad 330, 361, 370, 390, 420, 490, 520 (all models)	5	Quality, attractive boats. Excellent sailing performance. Good tankage, storage and high level of craftsmanship.
Nauti-Cat 351, 39, 40, 42, 515, 521	2	Only consider later S & S designed models are much better performers than earlier tubby models. Newer boats are very high quality with inside steering.

Niagara 31, 35, 42	2	Well-built & roomy. Good value, but watch for soggy deck cores.
Nordborg 30-40	2	High quality but classic, narrow Elvstrom and S&S designs.
Nordic 34,37,40,44,45	2	Attractive boats, some solvable problems with mast step deflection and leaky hull to deck joint on the 40 & 44.
Norseman 400,447	2	Have held their value well but require a lot of maintenance. Rusty fuel tanks present an expensive repair issue. Attractive and good sailing characteristics.
Nordship 35, 360, 380, 430	3	High quality Danish yard. Gorgeous deck saloons models.
North Wind 43,50, 58	3	S&S designs, fairly good construction quality. Very few in NA.
Ocean 60, 71	2	Powerful boats, many have had blister problems and totally ancient now.
Ocean Cruising 42	2	Only a few built by Hank Hinkley. Classy, top quality.
Outbound 44, 46 52	5	Fast, well-built boats with excellent customer service. New company owners now
Ovni 35, 395, 445, 495, 58	5	Sturdy, low maintenance excellent aluminum, lifting keel. Newer the better.
Oyster 42, 45, 485,49,53, 55, 56 61, 62, 63, 66, 70, 82, 100	4	Attractive, expensive and good quality. Weak resale value on larger models make these a good choice to purchase used..
Pacific Seacraft 34, 37, 40, 44	3	Well built, classic lines with graceful overhangs & short WLs mean slow & small.
Pearson 365, 385, 422, 424, 520	2	Moderate construction quality, but good value. The 385 has amazing use of space and 424 cutter is tough to beat for value. These are plain-Jane boats.
Passport 40, 41, 415, 435, 44, 456, 470, 50	3	Modern Perry cruising design. Good storage/tankage, soggy wooden deck cores and bulkheads common on older models.
Pegasus 50	4	Innovative performance cruiser built in Slovenia.
Pretorien 35	3	Strong, solid & attractive, built by Wauquiez. Great value. Modest tankage, many have saildrives, a negative. Later models better.
Puffin 42, 50, 58	5	High quality aluminum expedition yachts built in The Netherlands.
Regina of Vindo, 38, 43, 49	5	Gorgeous, exquisitely built, highest quality deck saloon. In a class of their own.
Rival 36-41, Rival Bowman 42	3	Strong, good-looking and sailing boats. RB 42 very impressive.
Rustler 36, 37, 42	4	Totally impressive, high-quality boats and excellent company.
Sabre 34, 362,38, 402, 42, 402, 425, 452	3	Built in Maine, modest quality, limited tankage and storage, but very pretty. Doctor's boats for New England.
Sadler 34	3	Unsinkable, fast, great performance. Good choice.
Santa Cruz 52, 53	3	Strong, fast is fun, but pounds upwind! Last boats were built in FL
Saturna 33	2	Attractive and roomy Bill Garden-designed pilothouse cutter.
Scanmar 33, 345, 35 & 40	3	Limited production but good design & quality construction.
Sceptre 41, 43	3	Modern quality pilothouse with good sailing performance.
Seguin 44, 51 by Lyman-Morse	2	Semi-custom, Maine-built, powerful and attractive boats. Builder does refits.
Shannon 32, 36, 39, 43, 47, 53.	2	Good reliable, solid, traditional and slow boats. Some deck issues...
Sirius 35, 40	5	Highest quality, incredibly well designed German-built cruiser
Skye 51	2	Similar looking to Swans. Soggy deck problems common.
Southerly 330-590	3	Quality built, attractive and innovative swing-keel yachts.
Southern Cross 28, 31, 35, 39	2	Moderate quality, limited on deck storage, old.
Spencer 35, 42, 44, 54	1	Ancient, solid boats, built in Vancouver, B.C. Very dated now.
Stellar 52	2	Quality S&S design, well built, good detail work. Very limited production.
Sunbeam 32, 34, 37, 38, 40	3	Not bad. Built in Austria.
Sundeer 56, 64	3	Innovative design & excellent offwind performance. Good systems layout. Some need extensive refits. Steve Dashew design built by TPI.
Swan	3	Newest models poorly suited for ocean cruising with open cockpits and limited tankage & storage. Teak deck issues on older models.
Shearwater 39, 45	2	Sturdy, traditional appearance, fairly good performance.
Sweden Yachts	2	Racer-cruisers, short on tankage and storage and having rudder loss issues.
Tartan 34, 3500, 37, 3700, 41, 4100, 4600	3	Latest models are impressive, earlier ones have modest quality & tankage. Several 37's have circumnavigated – ok if it has been refitted & repowered.
Taswell 43, 49, 56, 58, 60, 72	3	Good quality and sailing performance. Limited tankage on some models.
Tashiba 31, 36, 40	2	High maintenance Perry designs built by Ta Shing.
Topper Hermanson 40+	3	Semi custom steel or aluminum Van de Stadt designs.
Trintella 35-47	3	Roomy and well built. Newer designs are aluminum and expensive.
Twister 28	1	Long production run. Sturdy but narrow, built by Tyler Yachts.
Valiant 32, 37, 39, 40, 42, 47, 50	3	Few problems with the newer, Texas built boats. Proven designs. Double ender.

		means limited cockpit stowage and no possibility of a swim step.
Vancouver 27	2	Also built in Taiwan & England. Solid pocket circumnavigator for the patient.
Vancouver 28, 34, 36, 38	2	High quality semi-traditional yachts built by Northshore Marine.
Vanguard 32	1	Sturdy but ancient 1960's Phil Rhodes design, built by Pearson.
Vega 27, by Albin Marine	1	At least six have circumnavigated. Inexpensive, light and fast.
Victoria 30, 34	2	Chuck Paine design, Morris built in Maine. High quality.
Vilm 116, 117	3	Quality motorsailers, solid and good for higher latitudes
Westerly 26 – 43	2	Not flashy, but moderately well-built boats. Similar to Moody or Catalina.
Westsail 28, 32, 39, 42, 43	2	Sturdy boats traditional design. Watch for leaky aluminum tanks.
Whitby 42, 44	2	Brewer designs, roomy and fairly well built but slow and old.
Yamaha 33, 35CS, 37	2	Solid, no-nonsense sturdy, low maintenance.
Yankee 30, 38	2	S & S designed. Inexpensive and very capable. Great value.

Catamarans

Antares 44	5	Most impressive construction details and quality. No saildrives!
Atlantic 42, 48, 55	3	Chris White design, quality construction. Several have capsized.
Balance 42-70	4	
Catana 401, 431, 471, 521	4	Good, fast design, but customer service seriously lacks upon delivery, complicated systems and expensive to maintain.
Dazcat 55	4	
Dean 400, 441	2	Fairly well built, roomy & comfy, moderate performance, good engine access.
Dolphin 46	2	Daggerboards, good performance/comfort balance.
Fontaine Pajot 38, 43, 44, Casamance 45, 46, 56, 60, 75	3	Attractive designs, quality keeps improving, so newer is better. Stick-built means stiffer and lighter than Leopard with better bridge deck clearance.
Garcia Explocat 52	5	A development of the very successful Garcia Exporation monohulls. Aluminum, go-anywhere in the world construction. Expensive with a serious waiting time.
Gunboat 48-90	4	Expensive, innovative semi-custom rocketships now built in France.
HH	5	Highest quality, performance and prices.
Kronos 45	2	Wauquiez-Beneteau built. Study but heavy and only 13 built.
Knysna 440, 480	2	Sturdy but a little odd; poor engine access. Foam-core, no balsa
Lagoon 38, 41, 47, 57, 67	2	Beneteau built, great charter boat, not as well built and don't age as well as Leopards. Research structural problems.
Leopard 38,42,44, 46,47, 62	4	Good designs, well built, easily maintained. Moderate bridge deck clearance. Leopard 44, & 48 breakthrough design with forward cockpit. Look for non-charter, owner 3 cabin versions. Research structural problems.
Manta 38, 40, 42	3	Well-designed and built. Great cruising boat. Slightly heavy.
Nautitech 40, 44, 48	4	Innovative design, good performance.
ORC 42-57	4	
Outremer 40-64	4	Fast & strong, lightweight construction, no balsa coring. Expensive and fairly high experience level required to sail these safely. Narrow hulls.
PDQ 32, 36, 42, 44	3	Long successful production run. Now called Antares 44 and built in Argentina.
Privilege 40-62	4	Good build quality & performance. The 435-465 hits the sweet spot for couples.
Prout 37, 38, 45, 50	1	Reasonably priced, well proven, long production run, but many are truly ancient.
Seawind 33, 39, 41, 52	1	Marginal quality, originally built in Australia, now in Vietnam & Turkey. Frequently delivered long after agreed upon launch date.
St. Francis 50	2	Below average quality & sailing performance, low bridge deck clearance.
Soubise 46 - 70	4	Excellent, super-fast and high quality, semi-custom. No longer in business.
Voyage 380, 440, 500, 580	2	Lightweight, luxury-focused, low freeboard & bridge deck clearance.
Windelov 42-57	4	

